

ISSUE 6 | MAY

fully grown.



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TO TAKE A BREAK

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A FRANK
CONVERSATION
ABOUT YOUR
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This issue we open up frank and sometimes uncomfortable conversations around mental health and wellbeing. A large part of why I began fully grown was to provide a safe space to discuss anything and everything and, as young people, being open about our mental health is paramount to how we view ourselves and others, now and in the future. We've aimed to hit as many elements of wellbeing to cover every feeling, thought and action. Watch this space for some exciting things to come in the wellbeing space...

As always, thank you to my wonderful team, especially as this issue coincided with everyone's University deadlines! We have persevered and produced a great issue which we hope you enjoy.

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hang in there...
Summer is almost here!

fully
wellness.





why walking is essential for your wellbeing.

by Poppy Evans

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As the days get longer and the weather gets sunnier, what better way to look after your health and wellbeing than by walking?

Over the last week, my roommates and I have started getting up early and going for walks at 8am. Quite frankly, I love it! Especially as the mornings have been getting sunnier. The early morning fresh air provides a welcomed awakening, and it's nice spending some time together before our working days begin and we start becoming busy.

I have wanted to start this habit for a while now, but it can be so tricky motivating yourself to get out of bed in the morning. When I attempted to do it solo, it would usually result in me thinking, "Ah, I'll do it tomorrow". As it is something we have all agreed to do, none of us wants to let each other down. However, we have also all been clear that if someone is feeling low or not up for it, then that's ok too!

Starting the day in this way has meant that the days feel longer and has given me more time to fit in all the work I currently have to do (it is the end of a uni year, after all, with lots of deadlines looming). I'm not suggesting that you start going for walks at 8am every day (unless you'd like to, I would definitely recommend it). And, we must be walking regularly, and there is plenty of data to back this up!

exercise and your mental health.

It is common knowledge that exercising is good for your mental health due to the physical, mental and social benefits. Getting your body

moving and increasing your blood flow produces endorphins, your body's "happy chemicals" that relieve stress and pain.

Going to the gym or doing aerobic exercises, such as jogging, swimming and cycling, are proven to reduce anxiety and depression. However, often we do not have the time (and admittedly, effort) to go to the gym or take part in a complete aerobic workout. This is where I find going for a walk is a much easier and enjoyable way of exercising.

the importance of walking.

The UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines recommends that adults aged 19-64 should undertake at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity a week. This may sound like a lot, but it only amounts to 30 minutes of walking, 5 days a week. It is also recommended that children and young people aged 5-18 should engage in physical activity for around 60 minutes a day – hence why PE is such an essential part of schools. Regular walks will:

- Lower blood pressure;
- Enhance performance of the heart, lungs and blood circulation;
- Reduce the risk of heart disease and strokes;
- Help maintain weight and therefore improve body image;
- Reduce the risk of illnesses, such as diabetes and cancer;
- Improve the strength and flexibility of muscles, bones and joints;



- Boost your immune system;
- Improve your mental health by lifting your mood, encouraging healthy sleeping patterns and reducing stress and anxiety.

Science aside, I find walking has a calming effect as it is a wonderful way to connect with your surroundings. Pay attention to the goings-on around you. Watch the squirrels scampering and the leaves falling from the trees. Feel the wind blow through your hair and against your skin. Listen to the laughter of children in a nearby park and birds tweeting in a towering tree. Smell the freshly baked bread as you stroll past a bakery. Often, paying attention to these simple things will

pull your mind away from your stressful thoughts and feelings.

‘10 minutes matter’.

Now, some of you may be thinking that as nice as regular walks may sound, your schedule is way too busy to be able to fit them in. If this is the case (and even if not), then maybe ‘10 minutes matter’ walks are for you.

The idea behind this concept is that each day you schedule in 10 minutes of walking downtime. We live in a busy world, full of demands, stresses, and technology. Taking a 10-minute walking break from work can boost productivity. For even better results, why not leave your phone or any

technology at your desk? This may make you feel uncomfortable initially, but it is a very beneficial habit to adopt.

You may prefer to take part in this downtime with a friend, which can motivate you and them. However, the only rule is that you cannot talk about work or other stressful factors. Spend this time enjoyably, laughing and talking about positive things.

This technique aims to minimise cognitive boredom, which occurs when you perform repetitive tasks for long periods. Integrating these practices into our life enables us to rest and recharge, boosting your creative flow and diminishing stress.

Short walks encourage blood flow and keep us mentally sharp. They are a secret weapon that we should all be utilising. England’s Chief Medical Officer, Sir Liam Donaldson, agreed with this by stating, “If a medication existed which had a similar effect [to physical activities, like walking] it would be regarded as a ‘wonder drug’ or a ‘miracle cure’”.

get out and enjoy the sunshine.

Whether you choose to go for a walk early in the morning, in the afternoon, or during the evening, it’s just important that you go for one. You won’t regret going for a walk, you’ll only regret *not* going on it.



knowing when you need a break.

by Ella Winbolt

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With what's undoubtedly been a difficult and challenging past year for everyone, it's okay if you feel a bit burnt out.

With running errands and juggling work, everyday life can sometimes become a bit too much. By the time you're ready to go to sleep at night, you may find it difficult to relax and switch your brain off. If you're feeling tired and drained, you need to know when to take a step back and say to yourself, 'it's time I take a break'. Here are some signs that you need to take a well-deserved rest day.

you're tired, but you can't sleep.

When you feel stressed and overwhelmed,

sleep is one of the first things to suffer. When you overwork yourself, it can lead to exhaustion. However, with all those thoughts going around your head when you should be sleeping, the feeling of anxiety can creep in, and you're left lying there wide awake wishing you could get a bit of shut-eye. Thus, a rest day will allow you to catch up on some much-needed sleep and leave you feeling refreshed and energised.

you're feeling sad more often.

Feeling exhausted and stressed for a long time can make you feel unmotivated and down. It can often leave you no longer finding happiness in the things you enjoy. Whether it's work or

personal stress causing you to feel overwhelmed, take a day to do the things you enjoy. Watch a funny or uplifting film, spend time with your family or do a fun hobby. Make sure to do something that you will enjoy and come back feeling stronger with an improved mood.

you find it hard to concentrate.

Are you struggling to follow what's being said in a lecture or meeting? Do you find yourself having to read the same line several times when reading a book? When there's so much going on in life, your brain can have difficulty keeping up. No one is immune to forgetfulness. Still, if it happens regularly, it can lead to mistakes and higher stress levels. Taking a break allows you to regroup your thoughts and focus. If that doesn't work, try mindfulness meditation, as it is proven to be a great way to improve concentration.

you keep getting sick.

Even if it's just a small, irritating cough, if you find yourself getting sick more often than usual, it's probably your body telling you that you need a break. Too much stress may lower your body's ability to fight off infection. So, take a day to catch up on sleep and eat healthily. This will boost your immune system and get you on a path to better health so that you can be at your best.

When taking a day off from responsibilities to focus on yourself, the most important thing is not feeling guilty. Don't spend your break stressing about what you should be doing, the emails, the washing and the uni work can be done the next day. Your mind and body will thank you for the day off, so take some time to give yourself a breather and a rest. You've earned it and you definitely deserve it.

let's talk about: mental health.

by Hannah Louise Shergold



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Sometimes our emotions can creep upon us, and we feel unable to process, understand and get through them on our own. It's essential that you reach out to the people around you for support in times where you feel vulnerable.

Opening up about your mental health is easier said than done, especially if the subject has never been broached before. We have come up with some simple steps to make starting the conversation easier.

pick a medium.

Having a direct face-to-face conversation about a sensitive and emotive issue isn't everyone's cup of tea. Instead, draft a text or write a letter; that way, you can read it over and ensure it makes sense. It may be advantageous for you to see your thoughts on screen or paper. You can then choose when to send it on your own time.

pick the right time.

Being in the right headspace is important if you're going to be unloading your thoughts to someone - remember they don't know what's going on inside your head. Calm yourself before starting the discussion, take some deep breaths, focus your mind and make sure you take your time.

find a comforting environment.

Talk to someone in a safe and calm place, where you feel comfortable speaking openly, without the risk of being listened in or too shy to fully open up. This could be in your own home or on

the top of a mountain, wherever is right for you.

practice.

If you are meeting face-to-face, it may be best to have a plan of what you're going to say to avoid waffling or not getting your point across. It may be an overwhelming conversation, which may suppress what you aim to say. Making bullet points means that you can refer back to them to prompt yourself if you lose your train of thought.

pick someone you trust.

Make sure the person you're confiding in knows you well and has your best interests at heart. You are entrusting this person with your inner feelings; you need to be sure they will listen and keep the conversation to themselves. You also need to be comfortable with the person to enable the conversation to reach certain depths.

what do you want?

Make sure you know what you want from the conversation before having it. Do you just want a listening ear, advice or a shoulder to cry on? Make sure you end the conversation feeling better than you did going into it.

If talking to a close friend or family member didn't help like you thought it would, you can visit these resources to speak to a licensed professional for an experienced opinion.

- **Samaritans.** You can contact Samaritans 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You can call 116 123 (free from any phone), email jo@samaritans.org or visit some branches in person. You can also call the Samaritans Welsh Language Line on 0808 164 0123 (7pm–11pm every day).
- **SANEline.** If you're experiencing a mental health problem or supporting someone else, you can call SANEline on 0300 304 7000 (4.30pm–10.30pm every day).
- **The Mix.** If you're under 25, you can call The Mix on 0808 808 4994 (Sunday-Friday 2pm–11pm), request support by email using this form on The Mix website or use their crisis text messenger service.
- **Papyrus HOPELINEUK.** If you're under 35 and struggling with suicidal feelings or concerned about a young person who might be struggling, call Papyrus HOPELINEUK on 0800 068 4141 (weekdays 10am-10pm, weekends 2pm-10pm and bank holidays 2pm–10pm), email pat@papyrus-uk.org or text 07786 209 697.
- **Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM).** If you identify as male, you can call the Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) on 0800 58 58 58 (5pm–midnight every day) or use their interactive webchat service.
- **Nightline.** If you're a student, you can look on the Nightline website to see if your university or college offers a night-time listening service. Nightline phone operators are all students too.
- **Switchboard.** If you identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, you can call Switchboard on 0300 330 0630 (10am–10pm every day), email chris@switchboard.lgbt or use their webchat service. Phone operators all identify as LGBT+.
- **C.A.L.L.** If you live in Wales, you can call the Community Advice and Listening Line (C.A.L.L.) on 0800 132 737 (open 24/7), or text 'help' followed by a question to 81066.
- **Helplines Partnership.** For more options, visit the Helplines Partnership website for a directory of UK helplines. Mind's Infoline can also help you find services that can support you. If you're outside the UK, the Befrienders Worldwide website has a tool to search by country for emotional support helplines around the world.



the benefits of drinking water.

by Poppy Evans



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It is suggested that we aim to drink 6-8 glasses of water a day: this amounts to around 1.2 to 1.5 litres. So why is it so important that we drink water, and how can it affect our wellbeing?

I can be the first to admit that I definitely don't drink enough water. I try to add it to my daily routine, but it's very easy to forget. It's important to remind ourselves of the benefits of drinking water and how it can impact our overall wellbeing.

brain functioning and energy levels.

Drinking water keeps you hydrated, so when you're not drinking enough of it, it can negatively impact your productivity and general mood. Studies have shown that fluid loss (which can occur during everyday activities) impacts:

- Mood
- Concentration
- Memory
- Frequency of headaches
- Anxiety and tiredness levels

I can often tell that I'm not drinking enough water when I have difficulties concentrating on work. Similarly, whenever I feel a headache coming on, I will immediately drink a pint of water.

A headache is one of the most common symptoms of dehydration, and for some, this frequently results in migraines. Some studies have even suggested that drinking water can reduce headache frequency for people that suffer from them.

water and your mental health.

Research has shown that there is a connection between drinking enough water and having

good mental health. Being dehydrated may well increase your risk of depression and anxiety.

According to Healthline, a study in 2018 showed that drinking more water lowered the risk of anxiety and depression. The connection between dehydration and depression was stronger. Still, results showed that anxiety levels were higher in those that weren't drinking enough water.

When I struggled with anxiety and panic attacks a few years ago, I looked at what I was putting into my body. When buying a snack, the first thing I would go for was a chocolate bar and a Lucozade sport, or a fizzy drink. I made a conscious decision to change this and started buying water and fruit instead. I think that this was one of the most important steps I took in fixing my mental health.

looking after your skin.

Skin is the largest organ in your body, so it makes sense to keep it hydrated. Drinking enough water is a natural way to get the glowing and healthy skin we're all looking for. If you are someone who suffers from spots or acne, it is super important that you're drinking enough water! Spots are caused by toxins clogging up your pores. Drinking more water keeps your skin hydrated and therefore minimises clogging. Furthermore, keeping your skin hydrated helps to maintain its elasticity. Drinking large amounts of water decreases scars, wrinkles, and soft lines, meaning that signs of ageing are lessened. As



© Sara Kurfess / Unsplash

you get older, it will be more difficult for your body to retain water, making it crucial to ensure you are drinking enough of it now.

I like to picture my skin as a piece of fruit – once they are dehydrated, they become coarse and wrinkly. Drink more to keep your youthful looks!

weight loss.

There are so many reasons why drinking water aids weight loss:

- Natural appetite suppressant – we often think we are hungry but we just need some water. Water takes up space in our stomach, leaving you feeling full and less likely to snack.

- Water increases calorie burning – this can be during exercise or resting. Drinking cold water further enhances this as the body uses up energy/calories by heating up the water to digest it properly.
- Aids digestion and helps to remove waste from the body – drinking water helps filter your kidneys. It minimises constipation, keeping everything down there flowing smoothly and efficiently.
- Reduces calorie intake – as water has no calories, drinking just water rather than other drinks means minimising your overall calorie intake, a helpful option if you are actively

trying to lose weight.

- You need water to burn fat – without drinking water, your body cannot break down fats and carbohydrates. In fact, drinking plenty of water increases your metabolism.
- Working out – we must drink water before, during and after our workouts. It helps the lungs, heart, and other organs function and helps muscles, joints, and connective tissues to move correctly.

drinking water when you're ill.

When you are ill, you must drink enough water.

Firstly, sweating, fevers and running noses all increase body fluid loss, leading to dehydration. Furthermore, drinking plenty of water relieves congestion and loosens the mucus in your nose, pushing you towards a speedy recovery. Similarly, staying hydrated helps the body's overall functioning and is better equipped to defend itself against illness.

There are so many benefits of drinking water, all of which are important for our overall physical and mental health and is backed by scientific research and data. Now don't mind me, I'm off to get a glass of water, and you should too.



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We often measure our physical wellbeing by monitoring levels of fatigue or scheduled check-ups by a professional - it's not something we think twice about doing. We go to A&E for a broken leg, or we take paracetamol for aches and pains. But when it comes to our mental wellbeing, how do we measure and monitor this in a beneficial way?

The five ways to wellbeing, created by NEF (the New Economics Foundation), outlines how to take care of our mental wellbeing. These include connecting, being active, taking notice, learning and giving. They are “a set of evidence-based public mental health messages aimed at improving the mental health and wellbeing of the whole population”, according to NEF.

The report outlines some arguments of a “population-wide approach to mental health promotion and provides more detail about the Foresight report and the development of the Five Ways to Wellbeing”. In some ways, the five ways to wellbeing are tools we can all use to monitor and improve our wellbeing.

Keeping track of our wellbeing is necessary for all aspects of our livelihood, such as the workplace, personal life and overall health. These observable factors, such as employment, help to measure wellbeing, say what works for wellbeing,

as well as “looking at factors that are subjective to the person experiencing them, like how safe we feel.”

Measuring workplace wellbeing is something T-Cup pride itself on, helping organisations keep up to date and measure their employee's wellbeing. With three product options to choose from - CheckUp, SpeakUp, WellCup - T-Cup use self-reflection technology to improve individual wellbeing within an organisation in “a measurable and sustainable way using real-time data”.

T-Cup is passionate about encouraging people to thrive in their daily lives with their own employees from various backgrounds, including Academia, Elite Sport, HR Executives, Business Leaders, Clinical Physicians and Technologists.

To measure employee's wellbeing, the organisation used a science-based approach to create Artificial Intelligence that utilises real-time data from individuals. Using 9 key questions that cover the areas of health, happiness and success, T-Cup focuses on aspects of our daily lives, such as “diet, activity, hydration, relationships, sleep, mood, stress, ambition and financial wellbeing”.

To find out more about the wonderful work the team at T-Cup are doing, [click here](#).

how exercise helps your mental health.

by Jess Doherty

We all know that exercise is good for our physical health, but it can also improve our mental health and wellbeing.

a mood booster.

If you exercise regularly, you will know how good it makes you feel. It gives you a boost in energy and releases endorphins, which make you feel amazing. A study carried out by the Mental Health Foundation showed the fantastic impact exercise can have on wellbeing. The research asked people to rate their mood immediately after periods of physical activity, such as brisk walking or jogging, and periods of inactivity such as reading or watching tv.

Researchers discovered that the participants felt more content, more awake and calmer after doing exercise than inactive tasks. They also found that the effect on their mood was most significant when the mood was initially low, showing how exercise really does boost your mood and improve your mental health. Taking part in exercise regularly will benefit your mental health in the long run, as well as your fitness.

break the stigma.

There seems to be a stigma around exercise with regards to the expectation of what counts. However, low-intensity exercise is beneficial for our mental health. There are several studies by the Mental Health Foundation that look at physical activity at different levels of intensity and its influence on people's mood.

These studies have found that low-intensity aerobic exercise, such as brisk walking, for 30-35 minutes 4 or 5 times a week, for 10-12 weeks is the most effective at increasing positive moods (e.g., happiness and enthusiasm). So, the stigma around how quickly

you walk and how fast you can run 5km needs to be squashed, as all exercise counts towards a happier you.

You probably think this all sounds great, but how can I incorporate exercise into my busy schedule, and how much should I be doing? The Department of Health recommends that adults should aim to be active and complete 2.5 hours of medium intensity exercise a week. This equates to about 30 minutes a day. This may sound like a lot, but don't be scared, we have lots of tips on how to get moving.

how to get started.

Once you have made the decision to become more active, start by asking yourself a few questions:

- What do you want to get out of your exercise?
- Would you prefer to be outdoors or indoors?
- Do you want to do it alone or with other people?
- Would you like to take up a new sport?

When you have established the direction, you want to go in regarding your exercise, you can make a personal plan. Incorporate exercise into your daily life. Set aside 30 minutes each day to indulge in your chosen physical activity. You could make a timetable to motivate yourself, join classes in your chosen activity, so you have a set time or make plans to exercise with friends.

These are all little ways you can incorporate exercise into your daily life, motivate yourself and really improve your mental health. So, get active and get those endorphins flowing. You won't regret it!

**fully
pampering.**





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by Hannah Louise Shergold

have a self-care day.

What does self-care mean to you? A hot bubble bath, watching your guilty-pleasure movie, getting your hair done, working out at the gym?

Self-care is subjective, differing from person to person based on your interests, tastes, needs and personality. What is universal is that self-care, or looking after yourself, is essential.

benefits of self-care.

improves your physical and mental health.

Some elements of self-care involve becoming more in tune with your body and its needs. Some choose to meditate or practice relaxing exercises, such as yoga. Others prefer more intensive hobbies as a form of self-care, such as running, cycling, or even walking. Looking after yourself starts from within, so ensure whatever physical activity you are undertaking is having a positive effect on your mental health at the same time.

reduces stress and anxiety.

Partaking in relaxing self-care activities that allow you to sit and reflect are great ways to recharge your mind and body. Sometimes a simple walk around the block to clear your mind and remove yourself from a stressful situation can do wonders for your mental health. Self-care doesn't have to be a long-drawn-out process; you can practice bite-sized self-care tasks throughout the day to keep your happiness topped up and your mind at ease.

boosts your confidence.

Sometimes, self-care can be about improving

our physical appearance. Getting your hair cut, painting your nails, trying a new face mask are all important parts of taking care of yourself. If it makes you feel good during and after, then it's something you should incorporate into your life.

enhances your emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, control, and evaluate emotions. Recognising when you need to take time for yourself is an important life skill that many can neglect. By identifying when self-care is needed, you are becoming more in tune with your emotions and, in turn, with others' emotions.

makes you happier.

Think about it, if your self-care activities bring you joy and you're doing them regularly, you're going to be a happier person. Exuding happiness and positivity keeps your mind healthy and improves your attitude on life and relationships with others. There's no catch, do some self-care activities and feel renewed.

types of self-care activities.

have a nap.

Evidence shows that napping is excellent for "improving mood, energy, and productivity while reducing anxiety and physical and mental tension." Listen to what your body is telling you. You're less likely to feel motivated and productive when you're tired.

10-20 minute "power naps" are considered the ideal length to allow the body to move



© Bruce Mars / Unsplash

through the sleep stages without feeling groggy afterwards. To help you fall asleep quicker, remove natural light from your bedroom, don't go on your phone or watch TV and listen to meditative music or anything that gets you in a state of calm or relaxation.

read a book.

Reading is a great way to remove yourself from reality and momentarily escape. Find a new book or pick up an old favourite and find a comfy spot to curl up in. It works even better with a cup of tea and a biscuit. If you're doing smaller self-care

activities throughout the day, then set yourself a limit to a couple of chapters.

listen to music.

Another great way to escape reality for a little while is listening to music. This can be done whenever and wherever and can drastically improve your mood. Create a specific playlist for when you need to recharge or for when you're stressed, low or anxious and add your favourite songs to it. Whack some headphones in and lie down in bed or go for a nice stroll.

have a soak in the bath.

If you're lucky enough to have a bath at home, then set aside some time in the evening to relax. Treat yourself to some bubble bath or a bath bomb, light some candles, turn out the lights and let life pass you by.

treat yourself to some new clothes.

Sometimes all we need is a physical pick-me-up. Buy that top you keep seeing in the shop window, or those shoes in that TikTok you saved last week. That piece of clothing will then serve as a reminder of when you needed it, and you'll feel happier in yourself. However, do make sure

you're not spending money for the sake of it, or over-spending more than you have. Read our article on ['how to reduce sad spending'](#) for tips if you struggle with this.

make your favourite food.

Having a nice, satisfying meal could be the self-care activity you need to end the day right. Think of a meal that you've always enjoyed eating and make it. It's even better if you share the meal with others and make an evening of it. If you hate cooking, then order it in. It saves you from doing the washing up!



colours of a happy closet.

by Ellen Vining

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Wardrobes free of dark shades can be challenging. After all, those colours make you happy, right?

Dark shades could be giving you more of the blues than you think. Studies suggest a direct link between your wardrobe and your wellbeing. Clinical psychologists encourage people to wear colourful clothes claiming that "looking at colourful objects triggers a mechanism in the brain that causes a sense of happiness", helping with depression. As practised by blogger Bee and Liana Satenstein from Vogue, just a week of wearing bright colours can have a major impact on work-life, social ability and anxiety, leaving you with a 'boost of bombastic confidence' says Liana.

Expert Constance Hart, a colour therapist from California, has moved on to further research regarding colours in relation to depression, stating that "colour has an effect on our psyche, it's always affecting us whether we're aware of it or not." Quite simply, when you take in bright hues like pink, red and green, it triggers the release of dopamine, which is the chemical released when you do things like go to the gym, meditate or listen to music.

Your mental health doesn't just have to be

influenced by your clothes either but in other areas of your life, such as the interior of your home. Yellows and oranges, in particular, are feel-good shades being the closest colour to sunshine. Pastels like peach, light pink or lilac also have an uplifting effect. With the general kept consensus being, the brighter and lighter the colour, the more optimistic it will make you feel.

I started wearing brighter colours when I looked around me and realised I was surrounded by crowds wearing only greyish monochrome, especially in winter when people, myself included, tended to feel dreary. So, I started wearing only pink, which made me feel alleviated, confident and ready for the day. I may have gotten a few funny stares, but that was all a part of the fun!

When I wore black, I felt less daring, unmotivated and noticeably less bubbly. It can be daunting to break from your comfort zone, but you can start by integrating small pops of colour through the use of accessories and work your way up to being someone who stands out. This could be most your most colourful year yet; rest assured that your life could quickly burst into colour, so be bold!

Always & forever

WHATEVER YOU ARE, BE A GOOD ONE.

"Oh wow... a blender, just what we wanted!"
- said no newlywed ever

\$95
The Monocle Guide to Cosy Homes
DANISH DESIGN
MADE WITH LOVE
ferm
gestalter
\$65



fully functional.



how to find the right hobby for you.

by Katy Bishop

This past year, we have found ourselves spending an increased amount of time at home, finding a hobby that's right for you can be a source of sanity during these crazy time.

There is no denying that we were thrilled to get the chance to spend more time sitting on our sofas watching Netflix at first. However, as the lockdowns kept coming, many of us have found ourselves at a loss on how to spend our spare time.

finding the right hobby for you.

Hobbies may seem like a slightly silly thing when you're an adult, but they aren't just the swim teams and after school clubs; our parents used to force us to join when we were 12. Hobbies can be an important part of our schedules and can bring balance into our busy weeks.

why hobbies are good for us.

Hobbies have many benefits and can bring peace into our hectic, and at times unpredictable, lives. It is pretty easy to see a free evening on your calendar and fill it with a few episodes of a TV show. However, when we choose to do active leisure, such as sports, arts, and gardening, we can lose ourselves entirely to the activity and adopt a completely relaxed state. Let's be honest we all need a little more zen in our lives, so here is a simple step by step guide to finding the right hobby for you.

going back to basics.

Start by thinking back to your childhood; what interests did you have? Did you have your head

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buried in books, or did you enjoy making things to show your parents? There is a strong chance you still have those same interests as an adult. Take these childhood passions and link them to something you could do now. For example, if the back garden was your playground growing up, gardening or hiking may be the hobby for you.

hobbies vs interests.

It can be pretty tricky to distinguish between an interest and a potential hobby, as they are similar concepts. Interests are the desire to learn about something. You may be interested in football because your boyfriend seems to be obsessed. However, this doesn't necessarily mean you want to go and put on a pair of football boots. An interest may inspire a hobby, but hobbies require a little more commitment and often involve learning a new skill. Hobbies are often defined as enjoyable leisure activities that we consistently engage in our free time.

taking a test spin.

At this point, you may have brainstormed a few hobby options. Maybe you've decided that you loved textiles at school, and embroidery seems like your cup of tea. Now it's time to take it for a test run. Throwing yourself into multiple hobby options can be a great way to try different ones for size and see which one fits best.

fitting hobbies in.

When deciding your hobby, you may want to consider how much time you have to work with.

According to the Office of National

Statistics, data found those aged 65+ spent the most time on leisure activities. Spending an average of seven hours and 10 minutes per day leisurely, 50% more time than 25-34-year-olds, who had only four hours and 46 minutes of rest a day.

Try thinking of your time in weeks rather than days. Maybe you can find a few hours a week for you to spend time doing your hobby. If you take some social media scrolling out of your schedule, you may be able to fit in a few more hours of doing something that makes you happy.

price.

If you don't want to spend a fortune on gardening gear or a sewing machine, think about which hobby fits your budget. Maybe you already own the things you need but have just forgotten about them, and they're hidden in a drawer somewhere? Or if there is an expense to get started, ask for it as a gift from family or friends.

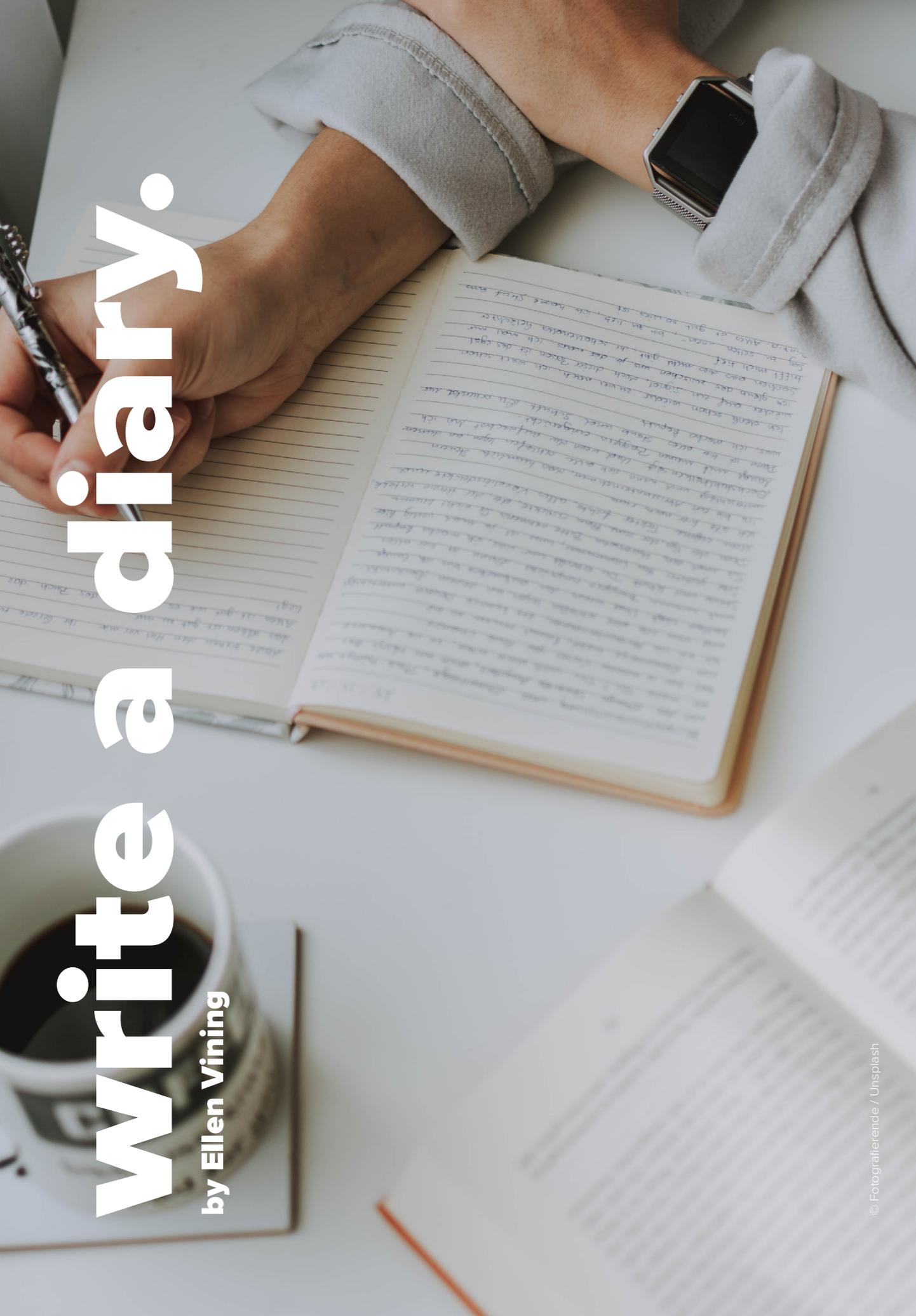
social or solo.

You may be wondering whether your ideal hobby involves some quiet time by yourself or heading out somewhere social. Solo hobbies can help focus the mind, allow you to multitask, give you a few hours of peace and help you spend time with yourself. Social hobbies are a great way to meet new people and bond with others with similar interests. Both have their benefits; choose the one that feels right for you.

Overall, hobbies are a great way to unwind from your daily routine. Spending time doing creative, wholesome and enjoyable activities can significantly improve your mental health and day.

Happy Hobbying!





write a diary.

by Ellen Vining

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Since I was 7 years old, I have written diaries, writing down when I have loved, grieved, cried and accomplished.

Writing a diary as an adult always gives me a new perspective, allowing me to release emotion in a healthy way and to understand myself.

You don't have to write every day; I keep mine by my bed to write in whenever I feel as though I need to get something off my chest. As a (sort of) adult now, I also like to write to my future self, asking her questions which help me to look at the grand scheme of my life and so that future me can learn from mistakes and remember days and moments which I wouldn't have remembered had I of not written them down.

Keeping a diary has been proven to have numerous mental health benefits. You can prioritise yourself and look at strategic ways of solving your life problems, helping you feel less stressed. It can provide an opportunity for positive self-talk, private and comforting self-love, and help you spot your negative thought patterns. Keeping a diary is a highly recommended stress-management tool that is not only effective but enjoyable. It can help with memory and comprehension and altogether boost your mood.

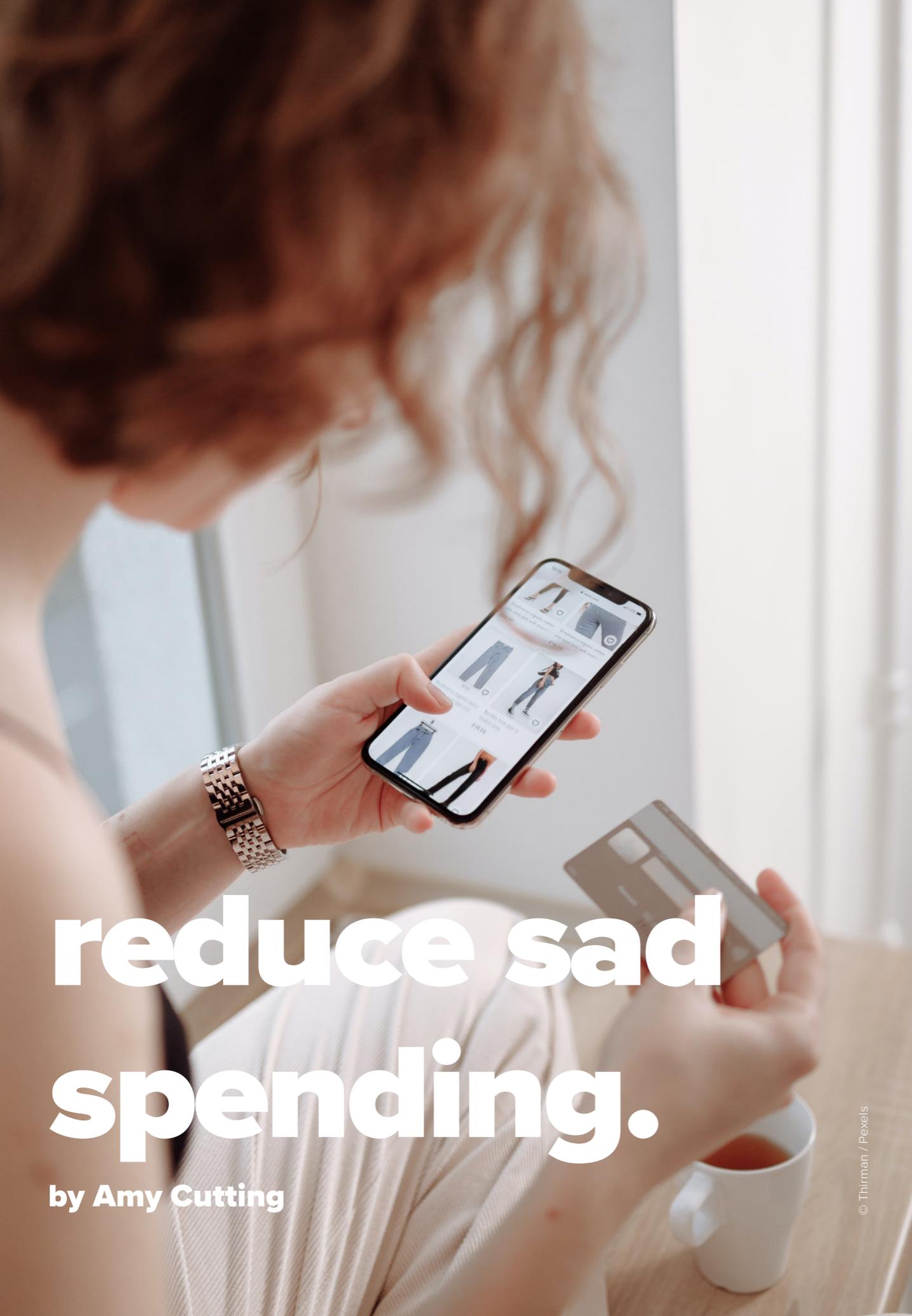
It was my Nana who bought me my first ever diary. Beginning on the 10th of December 2007 to my most recent entry being the 8th of April 2021 (three diaries later.) I can quite literally read

myself growing into a woman. It has been one of the most rewarding gifts that I have ever been given. If you start writing from now, being a young adult, and onwards, you will have an invaluable piece of your life to refer back to when you are older.

If you're unsure how to write to yourself, you can go to Pinterest for journal prompts. These include a range of topics from mental health and self-love, to 'a new you' and self-discovery. Some of my personal favourites include: 'What do you know to be true today that you didn't a year ago?', 'How have you changed in the last five years?' and 'What do you need more of in life?'

I have noticed that when I put an entry in, I tend to be complaining most of the time – which is okay; that's what my diary is there for. However, recognising this pattern has meant I now regularly write in things that I am happy for, pleased about or moments that I have cherished.

As a challenge, note down a few days this week how you feel, what you have done, and why you feel a certain way about it. Starting this new habit might be just what you need to feel like you're growing yourself into a more positive, self-loving, life admiring and problem-solving you. Don't pressure yourself to write in it every day, just when you feel like you need to talk to a non-judgemental notebook.



reduce sad spending.

by Amy Cutting

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Some call it melancholy, others call it sadness, but then there are the people who call it 'I'm going to spend a lot of money on random things to distract myself from heartache.'

Frankly, I am the latter and as are many others who indulge themselves in sad spending as a way of avoiding their problems. Endless advertisements overtake our newsfeeds, brainwashing us into a trance of online shopping, scrolling for hours on end, click, click, clicking away like we suddenly have endless money to spend. When realistically, you are a broke student like me who needs a confidence boost because you haven't been able to have your hair done in a long time and you're single as hell. Clothes, shoes, snacks and even furniture become the only solution.

Sad spending, although giving you short-term happiness, will eventually be clouded as you watch the money steadily leave your account. The resultant effect may be damaging to your mental health, however, there are ways you can avoid spending too much or purchasing unnecessary items that you come to regret.

Treating yourself every once in a while is totally normal and something we encourage, self-care is an important part of taking care of your wellbeing. Rather than wasting your money on pointless things, however, you should see your money as an investment to spend wisely. Instead of buying yourself that new pyjama set that will be screwed up with the seven others you've never worn, buy a personal improvement book or invest in a self-care activity that will relax you. As well as spending your money on physical



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things, make sure you put a bit of it to the side every time you get paid or get given some money. Put it into your savings or somewhere harder to access so you have something to fall back on if life ever gets a little hectic or you're in an emergency situation and need financial aid quickly.

Here are some tips and tricks to avoid or reduce your sad spending habits:

- 1.** Set yourself a weekly budget.
- 2.** When you feel sad and feel tempted to shop, contact your close friends and arrange a movie night. Grab some snacks and wallow cheaply.
- 3.** Put aside a bit of money every time you get paid. Save, save and save.
- 4.** If you regularly sad spend, focus on what's causing these feelings and see whether you can change the root of the problem.
- 5.** Remove any shopping apps from your phone so you're not tempted to flick through.
- 6.** Unsubscribe from shopping emails and spam to avoid temptation.

fully
foodie.



carbonara for

by Elizeta Pyloti



Serves: 1

Prep: 5 mins

Cook: 10 mins

ingredients.

125 g of spaghetti or your own portion of spaghetti

3 rashers of smoked bacon

1 egg

30g of grated parmesan cheese or Vegan hard cheese

½ teaspoon of black pepper

A pinch of salt

method

Step 1:

Boil Water and with a pinch of salt. Whilst the water is coming to a boil, roughly chop the bacon. Add some olive oil to a pan and add the bacon. Add pasta in the boiled water and leave to boil for 8 minutes for the perfect 'Al Dente' pasta.

Step 2:

While the pasta is boiling and the bacon is slowly frying, whisk together the egg, the parmesan cheese, pepper and salt in a bowl. Reserve a little bit of the pasta water for later and drain the pasta. Add the pasta to the fried bacon in the pan.

Step 3:

With the frying pan off the heat, add the egg mixture to the pasta and quickly mix the pasta and the egg mixture. It is important to have the pasta off the heat and move it quickly, as this stops the eggs from scrambling and gives you a rich, glossy sauce. If the mixture isn't saucy enough, you can add the reserved pasta water to loosen up the mix.

Step 4:

Serve in a bowl with some extra grated parmesan. You can also add extras, such as cooked chicken or mushrooms for a fuller, richer meal.

Top tip:

Connor recommends using original spaghetti, but you can make the carbonara with any type of pasta you like. I prefer to make it with whole grain rotini pasta, as it increases your energy levels, and it blends well with the sauce.

It is also worth mentioning that eggs are filling and nourishing. Eggs have many nutrients and vitamins, such as Vitamin B12 and Phosphorus and are essential for our bodies.

fantastic fruit crumble.

by Elizeta Pylioni

Prep: 10 mins
Cook: 30 mins
Serves: 1

ingredients.

1 apple or 2-3 plums or 75g of mixed berries
50g of butter
100g of flour
40g of brown sugar
1 or 2 teaspoons of lemon juice - to taste
optional: a few drops of vanilla extract and a
tablespoon of granulated sugar for the fruits

method.

Step 1:

Chop and cook the fruit in a pan with lemon juice and optional vanilla extract, and sugar for a few minutes. In a bowl, rub together the butter and the flour until it looks like breadcrumbs. Then mix in the sugar.

Step 2:

In a ceramic dish, layer the fruit and then add the crumble on top. Bake for 30 minutes until the top is golden brown. Serve with vanilla ice cream, custard or double cream.

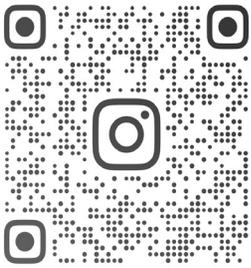
Plum Crumble is one of my go-to recipes because it is quick and easy to make, satisfying and comforting. The lemon juice adds a nice zest to the fruits, balanced by the crumble's sweetness. My serving suggestion would be to add a little bit of cinnamon to the crumble mixture, or after you take it out of the oven, add some extra spice to it!

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